



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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IM Weekly Highlights



- County Commissioners joined IM personnel on the initial inspection of civil construction at the Greycliff site in Sweet Grass County.
- Good progress is being made on the Limestone Hill site development project. The tower is now completed.
- Civil construction work continues on the PSIC-funded Southwest Loop. The tower at VC Pass has been erected.
- IM staffers continue to work with the USAF on the Remote Visual Assessment (RVA) project, and steady progress is being made.
- IM is hiring a Communications Systems Planner to support local partners in developing and implementing communications system plans as well as to provide technical assistance to system users. For more information, visit:

http://interop.mt.gov/staffing_sub-committee.mcp

TEXTING IS NOT A CHOICE! FOR 9-1-1 USE YOUR VOICE!

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Text messaging and instant messaging are becoming much more common methods of communicating than the traditional two-way voice telephone call. Nowadays, many citizens expect to be able to be able to contact 9-1-1 centers from any device, anytime, anywhere. Yet, traditional 9-1-1 technology in Montana **cannot** transmit text information to 9-1-1 centers.



In an effort to educate citizens in Montana, your HAM editor has been asked to help spread the word that emergency texts, instant messaging or e-mails will **NOT** reach our 9-1-1 centers. During an emergency, persons reporting an incident must dial 9-1-1. If the caller is unable to speak or fears giving away their hiding place, 9-1-1 call takers have the training to use 'silent call protocol' to get you help.

Public Safety Services Bureau
125 N. Roberts St., Mitchell Building, Rm. 52
P O Box 200113
Helena MT 59620-0113

In Montana, thirty-nine 9-1-1 Centers have deployed the technology to be able to determine the location of calls from mobile devices. Deployments for the last 14 centers are underway and should be completed within six months.

As society becomes more and more mobile and dependent on communication systems that are not stationary or tied to a physical address, law enforcement, fire fighters and other public safety service providers need improved tools to track the location of emergency callers. The State of Montana 9-1-1 Program applied for and received Federal grant funding that will continue to modernize the state's 9-1-1 systems statewide.

"It's all about making the state a safer place and giving emergency responders the tools needed to do their jobs effectively," said Becky Berger, 9-1-1 Program Manager for the State of Montana.

We urge you to tell those friends and family members who use cellular devices that text data will not reach Montana's 9-1-1 centers. Please stress **"TEXTING IS NOT A CHOICE! FOR 9-1-1 USE YOUR VOICE!"** Call 9-1-1 to report emergencies. Thanks for your help.

IM Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Bob McWilliams, Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) Chair, moved the agenda right along at the IMTC meeting on Mon., Jan. 25 in Helena. Best practices for concrete mixes at sites were explained as well as those for step bolts and climbing ladders on towers. Liquid versus vapor propane fuel technologies for generators also were discussed, and additional information will be provided to committee members on this topic.

Mark Canton, Motorola, explained recent changes to the Motorola 12-site contract and informed the group about technical features of GTR8000 radios as compared to Quantars, which are being discontinued. Pros and cons of TDMA (Time Division Multiple Access) and FDMA (Frequency Division Multiple Access) also were reviewed. The committee passed a motion to endorse the Motorola GTR8000 as the trunking radio of preference for the IM Project.

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Members heard sub-committee reports on frequencies, encryption, network design, and dispatch connectivity. They also reviewed Dec. task items and discussed updates needed on the build-out plan to use as the basis for the FY2010 Dept. of Homeland Security grant application. Members discussed unique radio communications needs of the City of Billings, and sites in the area were reviewed and discussed. A working group was assigned to review the build-out plan and update priorities and dates. The border grant also was discussed.

The approved BLM permit for the Belle Prairie site where the eastern master zone controller will be located is close to being approved. Once that milestone is reached, shelter bid work can proceed. Scott Bradford, PSSB, indicated that work also needs to move forward on the Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) portion of the PSIC grant.

Wing Spooner gave a report on the distribution of the IM Dec. 2009 Progress Report. It has been sent to more than 1,100 key individuals. Members then gave reports on activities within their consortia.

The next meeting is scheduled for Mon., Feb. 22, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, at the MACo offices, 2715 Skyway Drive, in Helena.

Northern Tier Microwave One Step Closer to Acceptance

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

Representatives from Aviat Networks (formerly known as Harris-Stratex Networks), the Northern Tier Interoperability Consortium, Interoperability Montana and the State of Montana met Thurs. in Helena to finalize closeout of the outstanding Northern Tier microwave contract. The microwave project, initiated in 2006, is completed with all hops operational and connected to the master site in Helena.

The meeting addressed remaining key concerns related to monitoring of the system, a T-1 problem at the Mt. Royal site, details of a 60-day monitoring period, and electrical generator issues. Backup generators purchased and installed under the contract are of particular concern because of not starting when needed due to an unknown design or installation flaw. Reliable power is essential for public safety operation and this issue must be resolved. The manufacturer and installation subcontractor will be engaged concerning ongoing problems.

With minor changes, the master close-out document that summarizes design and equipment changes made over the past four years was

finalized and is ready for signature pending the final decision on the 60-day trial monitoring period and emergency generator issues. Acceptance of this document by all parties will formalize full operation of the system. The close-out document and final steps will be presented to the members of the Northern Tier next week, with final signatures expected soon.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Tues., Feb. 2**

Border Interoperability Demonstration Project & Operation Stonegarden Grant Program Meeting
Havre • 10:00am - noon

CBP Havre Station, 345 16th Ave West

- **Tues., Feb. 2**

Funding Sub-Committee Meeting

Billings • 1:00 pm

Billings Police Dept. Training Center, 4810 Midland Rd.

- **Tues., Feb. 2**

IM Outreach Presentation

White Sulphur Springs • 1:30 pm

Meagher County Courthouse, 15 West Main St.

- **Wed., Feb. 3**

Montana APCO Chapter Meeting

Great Falls • 1:30 pm

Great Falls Police Department, 112 1st Street South

http://www.mtapco.org/files/Agenda_February_3_2010.doc

- **Thurs., Feb. 4**

IM Outreach Presentation

Chippewa-Cree Business Committee • 9:00 am

Rocky Boy's Reservation, Tribal Headquarters

RR1, Box Elder

- **Thurs., Feb. 4**

Northern Tier

Havre • 9:00 am - noon

Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

- **Thurs., Feb. 4**

Mobile Data Terminal Consortium

Helena • 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Law Enforcement Center, 221 Breckenridge



**Happy
Groundhog's Day!**
(Observed on Feb. 2)